

***Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2019
Hanover High School***

Present: Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mr. John Geary, Mrs. Kimberly Booker and Mrs. Libby Corbo

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Deborah St. Ives and Keith Guyette, Jane DeGrenier, Mike Oates

Absent: Mrs. Leah Miller

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Mrs. Lynch

Public Comment: None presented

Approval Minutes:

The June 18, 2019 School Committee General Session minutes were tabled due to lack of quorum.

The September 11, 2019 School Committee General Session minutes were tabled for approval at the following meeting.

Action Items:

- **HHS France/Switzerland Field Trip Request** – Presented by Hanover High School History teacher Kevin Perry. He's led a field trip for the past nine years. This year's trip is to Provence, France and Geneva, Switzerland. The trip will take place for nine days over April vacation. The historical connections of this field trip are connected to Roman history and 20th century Geneva.

Mrs. Corbo questioned the financial alignment with prior international trips. Mr. Perry responded that this trip is less expensive than last year's Italy trip.

Mrs. Corbo questioned the ratio of students to chaperone. Mr. Perry replied that the ratio is six students to one chaperone.

Mrs. Lynch requested the date for the unknown details as noted on the request form. Mr. Perry replied that the payment deadline is the end of December so all information should be known by then. She requested for form to be completed and presented at the January meeting. Mr. Perry agreed.

Motion by Geary to grant permission for the HHS France/Switzerland Field Trip Request under the condition that an updated request form will be submitted as written. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The vote carried unanimously.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:

- **Events and Updates** – Overall a great place to be in at the start of a new school year. Transportation has gone very smoothly. The tennis courts at the High School will be repaired in the spring which interferes with the schedule. In response, the Athletic Director has confirmed that the Hanover YMCA will be the location for home matches.

Mrs. Booker questioned the transportation required for this change in location. Mr. Ferron replied that the details are not known at this time but he will speak with the Athletic Director and get back to the Committee.

The MCAS results were posted in the Patriot Ledger and online. Hanover's scores improved district-wide from prior year but there is always room for improvement.

Mrs. Lynch questioned as to when the MCAS scores will be presented to the Committee. Mr. Ferron replied that findings will be presented sometime in early November.

- **2019-2020 Superintendent Goals Draft 1.0 –**

- Goal 1: Student Learning - Read 2700 Year 2 - The Hanover School System aspires to exceed our current capacity to deliver research based, impactful, effectively aligned, comprehensive literacy skills and strategies for students of all abilities; pre-kindergarten through graduation. Summary: Under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, we will implement teacher centered training to raise the instructional capacity of HPS staff. This increased capacity, in turn, will support the development of exceptional readers, writers, and thinkers by incorporating the essential components of a balanced literacy program: phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and writing.
- Goal 2: Presently, this goal is on standby. It would only commence upon direction from appropriate officials to begin this exploration process. I am listing it here in the event it moves forward given the amount of work and time it will require, and to keep the School Committee informed. Summary: We will work to identify all opportunities to redevelop the Sylvester School building to determine its value as a community-learning center and office space for HPS Administration. This evaluation will include visioning for services that will support and improve educational opportunities in Hanover and the South Shore, building/code requirements, real estate and development estimates, cost benefit analysis for potential usage, and funding options for development costs.
- Goal 3: Professional Practice/Community Engagement – Develop and implement a pilot program to increase access and exposure to FACE enrichment opportunities. Summary: To develop and implement a series of tuition free FACE enrichment offerings at strategic grade levels to afford all students an opportunity for new learning experiences while providing access for all students and families during their time in HPS.
- Goal 4: District Improvement/Student Learning - To develop and brand Cedar School as an early learning center by providing a developmentally appropriate, rich learning environment that meets the individual social-emotional, physical, language, and educational needs of our youngest students. Summary: (1) Beginning with a play-based environment, our learners will be provided with high quality learning opportunities that foster independence, curiosity, a love of learning, and respect for themselves and others, (2) to research, observe, and model best practices for an early learning center throughout the year and adopt these practices, activities, and strategies as appropriate, (3) to survey staff, parents, community, and experts developing a vision and outlining a plan for our unique school community, (4) to develop and implement a strategy to ensure Cedar school meets and exceeds the social, educational, and environmental needs of our youngest learners and (5) to provide students with developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction that differentiates for diverse learning resulting in increased student engagement, growth and achievement.

Comments related to Goal 1:

Mrs. Booker stated that the Literacy Community has issues with the Balanced Literacy language and Reader's Workshop model. In addition, she has requested some research regarding this program. Mrs. St. Ives responded that "Balanced Literacy" as pertaining to Hanover schools, uses all the cognitive research and outside consultants to create a successful program. On September 25th, a portion of the staff received Professional Development training for the ongoing improvement and adjustment of the Literacy Program.

The desire for students to love reading and enjoy talking about what they've read is among the goals of the program. In addition, she encouraged families to reach out with their questions and concerns.

Mrs. Booker questioned the reason for not using a structured approach toward literacy. Mrs. St. Ives responded that they want to create a love of learning. In addition, Hanover's literacy program is based on the best known research within the field.

Mrs. Booker questioned whether Balanced Literacy includes the "three cueing system". Mrs. St. Ives replied that it does, and this enables students to discuss what they are reading. Also, there are mixed reviews but that they do not relate to comprehension. In addition Mrs. Booker questioned how not to have students "guess" at words when reading. Mrs. St. Ives replied that behaviors are tracked when assessing their reading level stage which allows for any movement forwards or backwards.

Mr. Geary responded that the Committee had previously voted that Balanced Literacy is Hanover's district strategy. In addition, he questioned Mrs. Booker as to who are the communities that are not in favor of Balanced Literacy. She stated that they are outside sources but she was not aware of the feedback prior to the Balanced Literacy approval. Mr. Geary commented that outside feedback is not relevant to Hanover moving forward. Mrs. Booker replied that families have reached out to her and she has forwarded their concerns to Mrs. St. Ives.

Mr. Geary questioned the initiatives stated in Goal 1, concerning how the Committee will monitor what has been accomplished. Mr. Ferron responded that this goal has numerous elements and will reported to the Committee on a regular basis via meetings and podcasts.

Mrs. Corbo questioned whether Balanced Literacy is interpreted as a flexible term. She appreciated the idea of a Parent Night to understand the changes in the literacy program. Also, she questioned how and when progress will be assessed. Mrs. St. Ives replied that the assessments remain the same but will vary depending on grade level.

Mrs. Lynch added that the information attained is critical for the District as an essential measurement in order to understand the initiative.

Comments related to Goal 2:

Mr. Ferron tabled Goal 2 as it is on standby for the moment. Mrs. Booker questioned the Special Education services provided in a separate environment. Mr. Ferron added that they would explore services presently provided in outside schools.

Mrs. Corbo questioned the valuation status of the Salmond School. Mr. Ferron replied that it is actively in process. Mr. Geary added that it was on the Board of Selectmen's agenda but unsure if it was discussed.

Comments related to Goal 3:

Mrs. Lynch questioned the how the Community Engagement Goal came to be. Mr. Ferron replied that he's heard from families and how they would appreciate the opportunity for free programs. In addition, it allows for the opportunity to try out new events. Mrs. Lynch asked if the programs are need based. Mr. Ferron replied that they are not, but this work could potentially bring scholarship relief for families.

Mrs. Booker questioned the possibility of decreasing activities fees as a whole. Mr. Ferron added that the idea has been considered and noted that fees have not increased in several years. In addition, Mrs. Booker questioned increasing the capacity for the popular programs to financially offset the others.

Comments related to Goal 4:

Mr. Ferron noted that branding "Cedar School" as an early learning center may limit its possibilities. Exploring the best practices for young children in order to promote programs for the above grades.

Mrs. Booker questioned the current recess schedule for all grades. Mr. Ferron replied that it's once a day except Kindergarten is two times a day.

Mr. Geary questioned the prioritization of the key actions. Mr. Ferron replied that this goal is about gradual growth towards the vision for Cedar School.

Mrs. Lynch commented that articulating the vision allows for positively moving forward with early childhood programs.

Mrs. Corbo requested reaching out to other districts and attain feedback on their early childhood programs. Mrs. St. Ives responded that networking is a positive reinforcement for potential ideas.

Report of Finance Department Presented by Dr. Thomas Raab:

- **Q4 FY'19 Revolving Account Report** – All monies raised in the revolving accounts remain in those accounts for their ongoing use. This report in its entirety can be viewed on the Town of Hanover website.

Mrs. Lynch questioned the account under “Grants” for the various PTA organizations. Dr. Raab replied that the PTA retains their own funds but the money in the revolving account is from any School Store t-shirt sales. He added that the FY'20 report will be presented at next meeting.

Mr. Geary questioned merging the Elementary school accounts. Dr. Raab replied that all spring deposits went into Cedar School artificially inflating their balance because of the non-use of Center School.

Mrs. Corbo questioned what the STARS Residency Grant is. Dr. Raab replied that he believes it's a grant for the FACE Program, and this grant is reimbursable.

Mrs. Booker questioned the reason for the Robotics team having a zero balance. Dr. Raab replied that the program is active but the funds have been transferred to the HS Student Activities Account.

- **State School Funding Legislation** – The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officers and municipal jurisdictions across the Commonwealth requested a review of Chapter 70 funding. Hanover's Chapter 70 allocation for FY'20 is \$7,023,879, which is approximately 25% of the overall budget. The shortfalls for consideration included: increasing foundation budget rates to acknowledge the increasing employer health insurance costs; Special Education/Circuit Breaker that allows transportation to be a reimbursable cost; stabilization of funding for economically disadvantaged students; and additional funding for English Language Learner (ELL) students. This document in its entirety can be found on the Town of Hanover website. The Act addresses the possibility of reimbursing a partial cost for Special Education transportation in FY'21 and widening the definition of Economically Disadvantaged. Dr. Raab noted that he will provide an update in January.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **Elementary School Transition Update** – Presented by Principals Mike Oates and Jane DeGrenier.
 - *Cedar Positives for Students*: New Friends/Connections with Staff, Playground/Recess & Independence (already adjusting to routines)
 - *Cedar Positives for Families*: Transportation, Curriculum Night/Orientation Days for Preschool & Kindergarten, Reading Room & *Positive Solutions for Families* series starts next week
 - *Cedar Positives for Staff*: Professional Development/Training Impact (PLCs, Google Training, Foundations PD, Scheduled TLA Coaching), Teams working collaboratively,

FISH! & Shared Read – events underway, facilitated by Ellen McLaughlin & Jillian Beers

- Cedar Opportunities to Improve for Students: Homework & Time on Learning by Subject/recess need to be reviewed/examined & Sensory Pathways (movement)
- Cedar Opportunities to Improve for Families: Making sure everyone is familiar and comfortable with routines (drop off, nurse, notes for dismissal changes and everything else new)
- Cedar Opportunities to Improve for Staff: Leveraging Talents and Skills, Adjusting to new grade level & adjusting Early Learning Center environment (transitioning from PBIS to PBS)
- Center Positives for Students: Access to a new playground and large field. Programs to connect with others as well as recognition opportunities.
- Center Positives for Families: Improvements to arrival and dismissal protocol. Increased communication with parents, including upcoming curriculum night
- Center Positives for Staff: Familiarization with new building and procedures went well and workshops and trainings were offered to help with the transition process.
- Center Opportunities for Improvement for Students: Continue to improve the lunch time process and also work to have kids interact with one another.
- Center Opportunities for Improvement for Staff: Support staff by filling vacancies and also continue collaboration with Landmark School to develop LBLC Program.

Mrs. Lynch questioned how many new teachers are at Cedar School. Mr. Oates replied that there have been approximately fifteen staff members added through transfers and replacement hiring.

Mrs. Lynch asked if the building has any immediate needs. Mrs. DeGrenier mentioned the playground issues and an issue with bees which has been supported by the Hanover DPW.

Mrs. Lynch asked about Curriculum Nights. Mrs. DeGrenier noted that the date was switched to alleviate the overlap between the schools.

Mr. Geary questioned if there will be additional fire drills to familiarize students and staff with their new surroundings. Mrs. DeGrenier noted that one was held within the first three days of school and three more are scheduled throughout the school year. Also, a practice drill with just teachers was performed. Mrs. St. Ives added that the drills were scheduled over the summer months.

Mrs. Lynch appreciated the ongoing efforts of the staff and volunteers to bring the students together in one collective school.

Action Items (continued):

- **Authorization of Attendance of Non-resident Students** – Presented by Dr. Raab, on behalf of Mr. Paquette, requesting the authorization for two current students to finish their senior year.

Motion by Geary to approve the Authorization of Attendance of the Non-resident Students as written. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The vote carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None presented

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2019 at Hanover High School. Expected agenda items will be: Strategic Objective Update, FY'20 Budget Update

Motion by Geary to adjourn at 8:42pm. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tara L. Wakefield

Tara L. Wakefield
Recording Secretary for the Hanover School Committee

Documents Used:

2019-2020 Superintendent Goals Draft 1.0
Q4 FY'19 Revolving Account Report
HHS France/Switzerland Field Trip Request

Appendix A
Appendix B
Appendix C